

A
S E R M O N
Preached before the
QUEEN
IN THE
CHAPEL-ROYAL

AT
St. *JAMES's*;

November the 7th 1710.

Being the
Day of Thanksgiving
To Almighty God, for the Successes of
this Campaign; and more particularly,
for Those in *Spain*.

By GEORGE STANHOPE, D. D. Dean of *Can-*
terbury, and Chaplain in Ordinary to HER
MAJESTY.

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SERMON

Preached before the

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By GEORGE STANHOPE, D.D. Dean of Can-
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2 COR. Ch. I. Ver. ix, x, xi.

We had the Sentence of Death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the dead, Who delivered us from so great a Death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver us;

You also helping together by Prayer for us, that for the Gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, Thanks may be given by many in our behalf.

THE Interests of Mankind are so mingled and mutually interwoven, that no single person stands independent on the rest. The natural softness of our Dispositions, and the forming us into Societies, have ordered matters so, that none can; And the Precepts of Christianity have refined upon both these, by commanding, that none should think he can, be truly happy or wretched alone.

But,

But, though we are directed in the general, to *rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep*; yet, how deep impressions the Fortunes of Others shall make, and how wide they shall spread, must depend chiefly upon their different Stations and Capacities in the World. Where the Eminence of the Character gives an universal influence to the Person; there all our Interests are centered in One Point. A Point which cannot be touched, though never so tenderly, without imparting the motion to every Line within its Circle. Thus *St. Paul* represents his Sufferings here, as a common concern to the whole Church at *Corinth*: And thus whole Nations are affected, not only *for*, but *with*, and *in*, their valiant Defenders, and gracious Princes. Their Dangers, and Cares, and Deliverances are Ours; and We live and die in them. In order therefore to excite in You that hear me, the Affections proper for our present Circumstances; I thought the Passage just now read, might not be unseasonable: in regard it very naturally suggests to our minds, these following Considerations.

I. *First*, The Use God intends we should make of great and long Calamities.

II. *Se-*

II. *Secondly*, The slow and gradual Advances even of those Deliverances, which he is fully determined to grant.

III. *Thirdly*, The Ground of Trust in God, which good Men may find in such a Condition, as the Apostle here describes.

IV. And *Lastly*, The Return proper to be made, when that Trust is answered and rewarded,

Of these briefly, in their Order.

I. The first thing I observe from hence, is, what Use God intends we should make of great and long Calamities. 'Tis that, when *we have the Sentence of Death in our selves*, that is, when matters are driven to such an extremity, as leaves no longer hope from humane and ordinary succours; we should not even then give up all for lost, but *trust still in God which raiseth the Dead*. Ver. 9.

Whatever those Pressures of the Apostle were, to which this Passage refers; the Grievousness of them needs no other Proof; than that they here are styled a *great Death*; and that his rescue out of them is compared to that noblest instance of Almighty Power, by which *God raiseth the Dead*. And such surprizing Events, it seems evident, are sometimes necessary
to

to beget in us just notions of God, and of our selves.

While things glide on in a smooth and equal Course, the greater part of them escape our very notice : For there is, in the reflecting Faculty of our Minds, somewhat, that bears resemblance to the Organs of our Bodies : On which nothing makes an impression, that we are conscious of ; except it alter the State they were in before. Thus all our common Blessings of Ease and Health, The daily returns of Light and cherishing Heat, The stated kindly Seasons of the Year, And a thousand other most valuable Mercies, are in a manner lost upon the World, because long Familiarity hath brought them into Contempt.

But, if it please God, in judgment, to inflict sharp Pains or a lingering Sickness ; if he make (as the Scripture terms it) our *Heaven over us Iron, and our Earth Brass* ; If he smite our Fields with Blasting, or poyson our Air with Pestilence ; We soon lament the Loss of that which was held so cheap before ; and learn the Worth of our Blessings, by the Want of them.

Thus a mixture of Good and Evil is an Advantage to humane Life ; Because in truth we need some such Variety ; if it were

were only to heighten our Relish, and to recommend our Enjoyments the more effectually to us.

But, when to this we add the dreadful Consequences of the Sin of Ingratitude; and how apt we are to forget the Author and Director of all these Events to us: Religion will soon teach us, that it is an Act of Kindness and Mercy in God, to refresh and awaken our Memories; and make us wise, though at our own Expence. And this is never done to better purpose, than by such Dangers and Calamities, as plainly prove an overruling Providence, by baffling the Wisdom, and chastising the Vanity of self-conceited Men; when they illustrate the Glory of God with such Evidence, that they cannot but perceive and confess the Deliverance out of them *to be his Work.*

II. And yet in such Deliverances, I observed, in the *Second Place*, God moves sometimes by very slow Steps. Thus, after *St. Paul* had escaped what he calls *so great a Death*; there were other Afflictions in which he felt the Continuance of God's Mercy; and more still behind, in which he hoped to find the Completion of it. *He hath delivered us, and doth de-*

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liver,

liver, and in him we trust, that he will yet deliver us. v. 10.

The World is God's own, and we must be content he should rule it according to his own Pleasure. It cannot therefore in reason be expected, that we should fathom every Depth of Providence; or be able to trace it, through all its dark and intricate Passages. But, since God hath made some Discovery of his Ways and the Reasons of them; it were a Fault, not to follow him, with all due Modesty, so far as his own Revelations will conduct us.

Ch. xlviii.

I. Now many Instances in Scripture teach us, that men do not only provoke, but prolong, their own Miseries. God tells his people, by the Prophet *Isaiab*, that he had *refined and chosen them, in the Furnace of Affliction*. When this is the Case, the purging off our Dross will determine the time of our Stay in that Fire. The Physick of Sufferings must be suited to each Patient's Constitution: For, though sudden and acute Diseases may be check'd by a few strong Remedies; yet a tainted Blood and inveterate ill Humours require the whole Mass to be changed by a long Course. From whence it follows, that so much as men under Correction, contribute

bute to their own Amendment; so much they quicken the kind Methods of Providence toward them.

But, of all the Sins that retard our Blessings, none seem to have a more malignant Influence, than Impatience and Ingratitude. This we find *Israel* often upbraided with; who soon forgot what had been done in *Egypt*, and at the Red Sea; and upon every peevish Disgust, were ready to fly in the face of God, and of the Governour whom he had made the Instrument of their Happiness. Let me leave their Sin and Punishment with you in *St. Paul's* Words, and let us look well to it, that the like never be our Case. These Men (says he) *were Our Ensamples, and those things are written for Our Admonition, to the intent we should not tempt God, as They also tempted. Neither murmur Ye, as some of Them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer.* I Cor. x.

II. Again, The Nature of that Dependence God requires from us, is such, as must surmount the Discouragement of Delays, and not be weary of waiting his good Leisure. It was *Abraham's* Commendation, that he stagger'd not at the most distant and unlikely Promises; and the Apostle compares afflicted Christians, 2 Tim. xi.

to Soldiers and Husbandmen, whose Harvests and Triumphs cannot be come at, without much Labour, and Toil, and Blood. But, if our Tryals work Patience, and Patience have her perfect Work, our very Troubles and Temptations, another Apostle assures us, will at last be matter of Profit and Joy to us.

Jam. i. 2,
3, 4.

III. But there is yet Another thing, fit to be attended to, under this Head. Which is, That God generally works by ordinary Means, and gives Success in proportion to those Means. So that here his Providence is principally observable, in suggesting noble Enterprises, making important Discoveries, furnishing happy Opportunities, and prospering Mens own Endeavours in the Use of them. This is the usual Condition of Publick and National Concerns; Of a People that have subtle and potent Enemies to deal with; And in general, of all Events, wherein the settled Course of Causes and Effects is kept to. There are indeed some Seasons, for the Almighty Arm to exert it self in miraculous Interpositions; but We, who have no Warrant to depend upon such, must tarry for a Blessing upon common Methods, be well pleased that our Fortunes are deposited in so safe a Hand; and,

and, after St. Paul's Example, trust on still. The Ground of which Trust is my

III. *Third* General Head: And this appears from the Text to have been twofold.

1. The Experience of God's great Goodness to him heretofore: And,

2. The Intercessions of his Fellow-Christians.

1. We see how St. Paul is animated by the former Instances of God's Goodness to him, from those Words, *Who delivered us from so great a Death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver us.* Among Men, 'tis true, Favours already bestowed are look'd upon commonly, as a Discharge to any farther Expectations. The Narrowness of our Souls in part, and, in part, the Insufficiency of our Condition, forbid a perpetual Succession of Kindnesses to the same Persons; and render it necessary for Them, who cannot supply All that need, to scatter Benefits among so many the more, by distributing sparingly to Each in particular. But it is far otherwise with that Heavenly Benefactor, whose Power is infinite; and whose Goodness no more knows any Bounds, than his Power.

He sees the Wants of all his Servants, without Distraction or Perplexity; and relieves them all without Difficulty, and *gives liberally without upbraiding*. From him One Mercy received is a sure Pledge of a Second, of Many, of Greater, of Better to follow; Provided always, we be careful not to obstruct the Course of that Bounty, which is ever overflowing, ever diffusing it self, out of a Source that cannot be exhausted, and a Disposition that cannot be weary of doing Good.

V. 11.

2. And yet to this we find another Ground of Trust added, in that Clause, *You also helping together by Prayer for us*. What could make a more agreeable Subject for the Intercessions of the Church, than the Preservation of an Apostle, so eminently zealous and useful? In proportion, We also may reasonably conclude, that, when Blessings of great and general Importance, to the honour of God, the Advancement of his Truth, and the Publick Good, are the matter of our Devotion; When the Solemnity of those Devotions, the Numbers, the Importunity, and the Piety of those who offer them, happily meet together; These will have no Denyal, They do even *δυσωπᾶν τὸ Θεόν*, (as St. Chrysostom speaks) perfectly vanquish

quish a good-natured Deity, and (allow me to express myself after the manner of Men) as it were, weary him at last into a Compliance. If these Phrases carry a Sound, somewhat harsh and bold; let it serve for my excuse, that the best Fathers of the Church have thought their Hardiness in using them abundantly warranted, by that eminent Parable of the *importunate Widow*; wherein our Blessed Saviour at once recommends the Perseverance, and sets forth the irresistible Prevalence, of our Prayers. Luk. xviii.

So considerable (and yet I doubt too little considered) is the Assistance, which Good Men contribute, by bearing a part, neither the least, nor the least successful, of those Difficulties, wherein their Friends, or the Publick, are involved. Let us observe now, *Lastly*,

IV. The Return proper to be made, when Successes of this kind are obtained: which is easie to be learnt, from that last Clause of my Text, *that for the Gift bestowed upon us by the Means of many Persons Thanks may be given by many on our Behalf*, v. 11. The Design of which Passage is, certainly, to instruct us; that, as oft as Affairs or Persons of a general Concern, have been (as they always ought

ought to be) recommended to the peculiar Care and Mercy of God : the Thanks for a favourable Answer to such Prayers should not fail to be equally publick and solemn. The Necessity, the Equity, and the Decency of which Duty, I should esteem my self obliged to explain ; Were I not persuaded, that You are here assembled in so just a Sense of these Particulars, as renders such Enlargement upon them needless. I therefore choose rather to draw towards a Conclusion, with some Reflections from the foregoing Heads ; which may bring the Substance of them closer to our own Condition, and to the happy Occasions of this Day's Solemnity.

Collect for
the Day.

I. The *First* could scarce be allowed a Place in this Application, were it, in the Nature of the thing, possible, for a *tedious and bloody War*, not to be attended with *miserable Calamities*. But so it needs must be, to all, who are engaged in it. For, how inevitably is every such People exposed, to Insults and Outrages, to perpetual Fears and Alarms, to insufferable Depredations and Difficulties in Trade, to the often repeated Hazards of Battle, to the variable Condition of Alliances Abroad, to Stratagem, and Falshood

hood, and delusive Overtures of Friendship, meant (like *Joab's* Kifs to *Amasa*) only to gain an Opportunity of striking home and sure: In a Word, to render the Hostility more successful, more fatal to them, who put themselves off their Guard, and are weak enough to be surprized by such Pretences.

These are but some of the Miseries that a long War imports from afar; But there are Others of the Growth of the Country, which sadly enflame the Reckoning at Home. The lamentable Effusion of the Blood of our Brethren and Fellow-Subjects, The Numbers of Widows and Orphans, the Discouragement and Decay of Commerce, caused by it, entail Grief and Poverty upon Private Families: And the Publick suffers many ways to a very great Degree. But why should I enter now upon an unseasonable mention of These? Let Us of this Nation rather bless and magnify the good Providence of Almighty God, and under Him the Vigilance, and Wisdom, and Temper of our Governours, which have preserved us from so many of the dire Effects of a long War; that, Those excepted, which are in a manner unavoidable, We learn the Rest to be the

Consequences of it, rather by History than Experience; and Several of Them, much more from our Enemies Sufferings than our Own!

II. But, in regard the Duration of such Evils was, under my *Second* Head, proved, in some Measure, to depend upon the Sufferers themselves; Let it, I beseech you, be every one's Care, to do His part in shortening the Remainder of Ours. And, to make the Triumphs of this Festival truly glorious, and the Devotions of it truly pious and acceptable, let us, with our Praise, offer up our Repentance too. And O! that our Luxury and Profusion, our Debauchery and Irreligion, our Neglect of God's Worship, and Profanations of his Name and Word, may from this Instant cease to separate between us and that Mercy, which these Provocations cannot but obstruct and suspend! May those Divisions and Animosities too, those unreasonable Partialities, and that bitter Zeal, which cannot but weaken any Common Interest, no longer give our Common Foe the Satisfaction of seeing us turn our Artillery upon Each Other! A ~~gain~~ Satisfaction, even That: For, as we have hitherto, So, I make no doubt, we

we always shall convince him to his Cost, that the most Opposite, in other Regards, are all inseparably united against Him: But still a Satisfaction, which every true *Britain* is concerned to take away the very Appearance and Colour of encouraging; by contributing his utmost to render our *Jerusalem a City at perfect Unity in itself.*

III. How firm, and full of Assurance might (upon these Terms) be that Trust in God, which he hath allowed us to imitate *St. Paul* in, upon those very Grounds, which composed my *Third Particular*?

The time will not suffer me to say, how many Instances of former Blessings will bear out our Expectations of more and greater. Not at present to insist upon That so lately commemorated, but never to be forgotten Deliverance, wrought by our late Prince of immortal Memory, which laid the Foundation of our many subsequent Mercies: What an amazing Succession of Victories hath adorned this most Auspicious Reign, than which none ever gave a People more reason to wish, that it were possible for it not to end, but with the World itself? They, who compare an-

tient and modern *France*, will I think, be obliged to allow, That, though our Arms have not yet penetrated so far into the Enemies Country, as at some times heretofore; yet the *British* Valour hath in no Age more nobly distinguish'd itself; nor was at any time a firmer Support to Our Friends, or a juster Terror to all that encounter'd it. And, can we recollect those memorable Days, that will transmit to all Posterity the matchless Renown of our victorious Generals? The Laurels gathered at *Blenheim*, and *Ramellies*, *Oudenard* and *Blaregnies*? Can we see so many boasted Fortifications won, so great a part of the Spoils and Armour, in which the strong Man trusted, wrested out of his Hands? Can we this Day rejoyce, that the Disasters of *Almanza*, are not only retrieved, but amply revenged at *Almanira* and *Saragossa*? Can we, I say, look back on these Events, and doubt the good Will of that Power, which directed them to us? After so many Experiments of the Divine Bounty and Favour, if the Measure of our Happiness be not yet full; What so rational Account can be given of that Delay, as the Want, not of Inclination on the Giver's Part;

Part ; Not any Want of Ability or Application on the Part of his Instruments : But the too manifest Want of Qualifications on our own Part ; who, it seems, are not ripe for, and fitted to receive it ?

However, for those farther Accessions of Favour, We, with *St. Paul*, encourage our selves to hope, from those Prayers, which have constantly attended our Forces to the Field, and as constantly brought them back with some just Ground of Thanksgiving. Those Prayers had not been vain ; though followed with no other Effect, than That of preserving our Country from being the Seat of War ; Which is but another Name, for a Scene of Desolation and Violence, Barbarity and Blood. But God hath done much more in our Behalf ; He hath covered the Heads of our Leaders in Battle : and raised up many Glories of their Age and Nation, of a Genius Superiour to all Danger and Difficulty. To one of these gallant Men so welcome, and indeed so surprizing, a part of this Solemnity is owing ; That Silence to Day were injurious to his Merit. And yet I am apprehensive, it will be thought, Another, in my Place, might with more Decency, enlarge

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Reduction
of Aire.

large upon his Praise. I therefore restrain my self, and pass on to observe this farther Instance of our Heavenly Defender's Bounty; That, while we were preparing to pay this Debt of Thanks, he hath been pleased to swell the Account, by Closing the Year with a fresh Advantage nearer Home.

Surely we cannot consider these Events, as Christians, without allowing the Prayers of the Church a part in them: Nor as good and grateful Subjects, without acknowledging our Obligations to that shining Ornament of it; whose Exemplary Piety and Devotion prove, that neither the Splendour of any thing that is Great, nor the Conceit of any thing that is Good in the Best and Highest of the Sons of Men, have tempted Her to neglect those humble Prostrations due at the Throne of Grace, on which Her Great Original; the only Arbiter between contending Princes, and the Giver of all Victory, sits.

And indeed a thorough Persuasion, that to Him the whole of our Success is owing, is the single Principle, that can acquit such Festivals as this, of Pompous Hypocrisie, and even mocking the Divine Majesty: This is the only rational Inducement

ment to improve our past, and to invite future Favours, by bringing forth such Fruits of Obedience, as an Holy God may delight to cultivate and bless. And assuredly, Those in the end will approve themselves the best Patriots, no less than the best Christians; Whose active Promotion of Piety and Vertue, Whose Justice and Charity to all Men, Whose Meekness of Temper, and peaceable Behaviour to the Ignorant, the Mistaken, and the Otherwise minded; Whose affectionate Zeal for Her Majesty's Honour and Service, and Whose Resolution and Readiness to unite in all Measures proper for supporting our common Cause, shall most eminently distinguish themselves.

But why do I say our Cause, when, were all of us thus disposed, God would not fail to make it his Own? We should soon see that Queen the Glory and Umpire of all *Europe*, who is already, so evidently, entire Mistress of the Hearts of all her own People. Soon should we find that Haughty Insulter of Treaties, in very good earnest, seek and court that Friendship, which he hath hitherto asked, for mere Stratagem and Amusement: And the same benign Providence, which hath already wrought so many
Works

Works in us, would ordain for us, that Peace, for which we have fought and prayed so earnestly, and we hope are now advancing nearer up to. A Peace, that may be safe, advantageous, and honourable; a Security to Us, our Allies, and our Posterity; As durable as this World can admit; and both an Emblem and an Introduction to that Peace in a better World, Which no Man taketh from Them, who, being delivered out of the Hands of their Enemies, Serve God in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of their Life.

Now to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be all Honour and Glory, Adoration and Thanksgiving, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.

22 JY 63

(Price 3d.)

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